

In 1981 I spent a couple of hours at Agege. It was more or less unchanged, but there were ominous signs. Survey teams were mapping the area. Still, I managed to see more than 100 species and to get yet another species new to the locality, as well as a statistically significant set of observations on the delightful Lycaenid, *Oxylides faunas*. This is a small butterfly whose underside hindwings carry a wonderful false head, intended to make predators attack the wrong end of the butterfly. This particular one has the added twist of turning 180 degrees in the air a fraction of a second before landing, thus adding to the deception.

It was only in March 1989 that I was able to revisit the locality. Alas, it was no more. Jerry built housing was everywhere. Only along the small river were trees still to be found, though a surprising number of butterflies were clinging on by the skin of their probosces. I found the little pool on whose banks my brother and I had once been engaged in serious conversation suggesting that we should get ourselves a Nigerian wife — big lads like us still unmarried, with no children! ! Here I had tied a net with vines to a four metre stick, trying to capture a rare species of *Epitola* from a tall palm, in front of a rapt audience of market women bringing *kola* nuts to Agege. Their cheers, when the contraption crashed to earth with the precious booty inside, still rang in my ears (as described in a previous instalment these same women had seen me ignominiously strip in public to rid myself of hordes of driver ants (*Ent. Rec.* 92: 865-87)).

But there is not much point in being sentimental. Lagos has grown from a small hamlet of a few thousand people to a conurbation of more than 15 million in less than a century. It has tripled since I paid my first visit in 1967. Well, Agege is gone. Sentimentality aside, I can live with that. After all, Agege was on the fringes of one of the most vibrant megapolises in the world. I do have problems living with the fact that in a few years there will be no "Ageges" left, unless conservation efforts manage to harness a level of political will and administrative skill that is not evident today. — TORBEN B. LARSEN, 358 Coldharbour Lane, London SW9 8PL.

**A pale ochreous form of *Herminia tarsipennalis* Treischke, the Fan-foot (Lep.: Noctuidae), in Dumfries.**

From 1985 to 1988 several specimens of *H. tarsipennalis* were caught in the Rothamsted Insect Survey light trap at Mabie, Dumfries (Site No. 454, OS grid ref. NX951 707). These records in themselves are important as the distribution of this species in northern England and Scotland is poorly known. However, the morphology of the individuals caught at Mabie makes the captures even more noteworthy. Rather than the usual leaden colour of typical English specimens, the Mabie individuals are sandy ochreous brown, reminiscent of a pale *Paracolax derivalis* Hübner. No specimens of the type have so far been caught in the trap. Although not mentioned by Skinner (1984), Heath and Emmet (1983) state that a

“yellow” form is found in Ireland. In the national collection there is a single yellowish Irish specimen to which those from Mabie approximately conform. Further investigation into Dumfries populations of *H. tarsipennalis* are required to ascertain the status and distribution of this form.

Thanks are extended to D. Watterson for operating the trap at Mabie, B. Skinner for his advice and to D. Carter of the British Museum (Natural History) for allowing access to the national Lepidoptera collection.

#### References

- Heath, J. and Emmett, A.M. (1983). The moths and butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland, Vol. 10. Harley, Colchester.
- Skinner, B. (1984). Colour Identification guide to moths of the British Isles. Viking, Harmondsworth.
- A.M. RILEY, Dept. Entomology and Nematology, AFRC Institute of Arable Crops Research, Rothamstead Experimental Station, Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 2JQ.

#### *Apion simile* Kirby, W. (Col.: Apionidae) in Cumbria.

On 27th August 1989 I collected three specimens of this distinctive weevil while on a day visit to the Kingmoor Nature Reserve near Carlisle (NGR NY38.58). The beetles, two males and one female were swept from low herbage beneath some Silver Birch trees at the entrance to the reserve.

According to M.G. Morris (1990, Orthocerous Weevils, *Handbk. Ident. Br. Insects*, 5(16): 51), *A. simile* is a local weevil in Britain, but widely distributed and known from England, Wales and Scotland. This species has not been previously recorded from Cumbria, and Michael Morris (pers. comm.) informs me that this is a new county record and the first for VC70, Cumberland.

I wish to thank Dr Morris and Paul Hyman for very kindly providing me with information regarding the present distribution of *A. simile* in Britain.— R.W.J. READ, Holly Terrace, Hensingham, Whitehaven, Cumbria CA28 8RF.

#### *Peridea anceps* Goeze, the Great Prominent, f. *fusca* Cockayne (Lep.: Notodontidae) in Stirlingshire.

A single female of the melanic f. *fusca* of *P. anceps* was caught in the Rothamsted Insect Survey light trap at Rowardennan, Stirlingshire (Site No. 97, OS grid ref. NS378 958) on 25.v.1990. The specimen is entirely black, almost devoid of markings. Skinner, B. (*Colour Identification Guide to Moths of the British Isles*. Viking, Harmondsworth, 1984) states that this form occurs in the Lake District and a similar form has been reported occasionally from Surrey. The present record is particularly interesting as it appears to have come from the northernmost known locality for *P. anceps* in Britain (Heath, J. & Emmett, A.M. (1983) *Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland*, 9. Harley, Colchester).